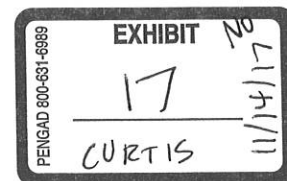


JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE



Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:

I am applying for Judge of the Circuit Court, Third Judicial Circuit, Seat 2.

1. Name: The Honorable Kristi Fisher Curtis

Name that you are known by if different from above
(Example: A Nickname): n/a

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge?
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.) I currently serve as Chief Magistrate for Sumter County and Municipal Judge for the City of Sumter.

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: Sumter County Summary Court
190 E. Canal St.
Sumter, SC 29150

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home): [REDACTED]
(office): 803-436-2280
(cell): [REDACTED]

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1969
Place of Birth: Dallas, Texas
Social Security Number: [REDACTED]

3. Are you a citizen of South Carolina? yes
Have you been a resident of this state for at least the immediate past five years?
yes

4. SCDL# or SCHD#: [REDACTED]
Voter Registration Number: [REDACTED]

5. Family Status: In the space below, (a) state whether you are single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated; (b) if married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name; (c) if you have ever been divorced or are in the process of obtaining a divorce, state the date, name of the moving party, court, and grounds; and (d) state the names of your children and their ages. If your children are old enough to work, include the occupation of each child.

Family Status: Married on May 20, 1995 to Warren Stephen Curtis.
Never divorced, two children.



6. Have you served in the military? If so, give the dates, branch of service, highest rank attained, serial number (if applicable), present status, and the character of your discharge or release. Please provide a copy of your DD214 concerning your discharge.
No.
7. List each college and law school you attended, including the dates of your attendance, the degrees you received, and if you left an institution without receiving a degree, the reason for your departure.
 - (a) Ball State University, August 1987 to May 1988 (transferred to University of South Carolina).
 - (b) University of South Carolina, August 1988 to December 1991, Bachelor of Arts.
 - (c) University of South Carolina School of Law, August 1992 to May 1995, Juris Doctor.
8. List the states in which you have been admitted to practice law and the year of each admission. Also list any states in which you took the bar exam but were never admitted to the practice of law. If you took the bar exam more than once in any of the states listed, please indicate the number of times you took the exam in each state.
Admitted to the South Carolina Bar on November 13, 1995.
9. List the significant activities in which you took part during your attendance at law school. Give the years you were involved in these activities and list any leadership positions you held.
 - (a) Member, ABA's Real Property, Probate and Trust Journal, 1993-1995.
Articles Editor, 1994-1995.
 - (b) Legal Writing Instructor to Professor Eldon Wedlock, 1994-1995.
 - (c) Associate Chief Justice, Moot Court Bar, 1994-1995.
 - (d) Member, ABA Moot Court Team, 1994.
Regional Winner, ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition, 1994.
 - (e) Member, Order of the Barristers, 1994-1995.
 - (f) American Jurisprudence Awards, Legal Research and Writing I & II, 1992-1993.
 - (g) Faculty Award, Trial Advocacy, 1994.
10. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years.
Please see attached.
11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs? If so, briefly describe each course or lecture.

- (a) I have spoken on the topic of “Real Estate & Landlord/Tenant Law” to Law School for Non-Lawyers, sponsored by the S.C. Pro Bono Program.
 - (b) I have spoken on “Landlord/Tenant Law” to the Sumter County Board of Realtors Continuing Education “Lunch and Learn.”
12. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each. Please furnish as a separate attachment, two examples of legal articles, briefs, orders, or other legal writings for which you can claim sole or primary authorship. If you cannot claim sole authorship, please explain the extent to which you are the primary author, to include a description of the other authors and their contributions.
- None. Please see attached for two examples of legal briefs.
13. List all courts in which you have been admitted to practice and list the dates of your admission. Give the same information for administrative bodies that require a special admission to practice.
- (a) South Carolina, 1995;
 - (b) US District Court for the District of SC, 1999
 - (c) US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, 1999
14. Describe chronologically, since graduation from law school, your legal experience. Please include a list of all positions held in which you worked in a legal capacity. Describe the general character of your practice and divide it into periods with dates if its character has changed over the years. Please also describe the extent to which you were involved with the administrative and financial management of each of these entities, including management of trust accounts.
- (a) Staff Attorney, South Carolina Court of Appeals, August 1995 to August 1996. Prepared legal memoranda and legal research for judges of the South Carolina Court of Appeals.
 - (b) Law Clerk to the Honorable Kaye G. Hearn, South Carolina Court of Appeals, August 1996 to August 1998. Read briefs and transcripts for each case assigned to Judge Hearn’s panel each month. Prepared legal research, memoranda of law, and draft opinions.
 - (c) Associate Attorney, Bryan Law Firm, August 1998 to 2004
Partner, Bryan Law Firm, 2003 to 2004
Business litigation, appellate practice before the South Carolina Court of Appeals and South Carolina Supreme Court, represented Sumter County and the Sumter County Treasurer’s Office, prosecuted criminal cases for the Sumter County Sheriff’s Department in Magistrate’s Court.
 - (d) Trust Officer, Synovus Trust Company, September 2004 to February 2011
I was responsible for the administration of trust accounts and probate estates where Synovus was named as the Trustee and/or Personal Representative of the Estate.
 - (e) Magistrate Judge, Sumter County Summary Court, April 2011 to present.
Appointed Chief Magistrate July 2011 to present. Jurisdiction over traffic and criminal cases punishable by up to 30 days in jail and a \$500 fine. Civil jurisdiction over restraining order actions, evictions, public sales, and small claims civil cases where the amount in controversy does not exceed \$7,500. We conduct bond hearings 365 days per

year, and hold preliminary hearings on a monthly basis. Jury trials in criminal/traffic cases monthly, jury trials in civil cases quarterly. As Chief Magistrate, I am also responsible for the administration and financial management of the Court. I supervise a staff of twelve employees.

15. Please answer the following (if you are a judge and are not seeking a different type of judgeship, this question is inapplicable):

- (a) If you are a candidate for Family Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience within each of the following Family Court practice areas: divorce and equitable division of property, child custody, adoption, abuse and neglect, and juvenile justice. Include information about cases you have handled in each of these practice areas, or if you have not practiced in an area, describe how your background and procedural knowledge has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Family Court Judge. Please also indicate the frequency of your appearances before a Family Court Judge within the past five years.

Not applicable.

- (b) If you are a candidate for Circuit Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience in criminal matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Further, please provide a brief written description of your experience in civil matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the types of matters handled, issues involved, and procedural history. Please include information such as the primary areas in civil court in which you practice, whether you represent plaintiffs or defendants, or both. You may go back further than five years if you feel it would assist the Commission with its assessment of your experience. If you lack experience in an area, describe how your background and procedural knowledge has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Circuit Court Judge, or how you would compensate for your lack of experience in this area. Please also indicate the frequency of your appearances before a Circuit Court Judge within the past five years.

Over the past five years, I have been employed exclusively as Chief Magistrate for Sumter County. During that time, I have presided over criminal and traffic cases on almost a daily basis. I have presided over criminal jury trials at least one week out of every month, conducting an average of three to four jury trials during each trial week. I preside over and conduct the jury selection for the vast majority of our jury trial terms of court. In addition to traffic offenses and DUIs, I regularly preside over trials for such offenses as assault and battery third degree, harassment, receiving stolen goods, malicious injury to personal property, trespassing, disorderly conduct, and simple possession of marijuana. As Magistrate, I also conduct bond hearings for Defendants arrested in Sumter County and preside over preliminary hearings requested by Defendants charged in General Sessions court. While practicing with the Bryan Law Firm, I served as the Prosecutor for the

Sumter County Sheriff's Department in all of that agency's jury trials in Magistrate's Court.

In the past six years that I have served as a Magistrate, I have also presided over civil bench trials on a weekly basis and civil jury trials on a quarterly basis. I have presided over a wide variety of civil cases including automobile accidents, construction defects, residential and commercial evictions, wage payment violations, breach of contract and breach of warranty actions, and Unfair Trade Practices actions. While practicing with the Bryan Law Firm, I handled cases in the area of business litigation, representing both Plaintiffs and Defendants. I represented a Plaintiff in an employment discrimination case, as well as several businesses seeking to enforce non-compete agreements. I represented several Plaintiffs in breach of contract actions, and also defended a case for specific performance of a contract. In each case noted above I was sole counsel and at least four of the cases went to a jury trial in circuit court. I was sole counsel in a wide variety of civil actions in both Magistrate's Court and Circuit Court. I also acted as associate counsel in a variety of other civil cases with other members of the firm. I handled appeals, both for members of my law firm and for other law firms, in such areas as medical malpractice, personal injury, workers' compensation, and family law. Two of those cases were reported as significant cases in South Carolina Lawyers Weekly.

- (d) If you are a candidate for Master-In-Equity, please provide a brief written description of your experience in the Master's court, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Please include the frequency of your appearances before a Master-In-Equity or a Circuit Court Judge within the past five years.

Not applicable.

- (e) If you are a candidate for Administrative Law Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience before an Administrative Law Judge, including any issues discussed and the frequency of your appearances before the Administrative Law or Circuit Court within the past five years.

Not applicable.

16. What is your rating or membership status, if any, by any legal rating organization, such as, Best Lawyers, Chambers, Legal 500, Martindale-Hubbell, Who's Who Legal, Super Lawyers, Million Dollar Advocates Forum, etc.? If you are currently a member of the judiciary, list your last available rating, if any.

None available.

- * **Justices/judges applying for re-election to their current position may omit Questions 17-22. If you are a judge seeking a judgeship different than your**

current position, Questions 17-22 should be answered based on your experience prior to serving on the bench.

17. What was the frequency of your court appearances during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench?
- (a) federal: In the five years prior to my becoming Chief Magistrate, I was employed by Synovus Trust Company as a Trust Officer and my law practice was limited to appointed cases in family court and post-conviction relief actions. While practicing with the Bryan Law Firm, I had one case that was removed to U.S. District Court, remanded back to Circuit Court, and ultimately appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.
 - (b) state: In the five years prior to my becoming Chief Magistrate, I was employed by Synovus Trust Company as a Trust Officer and my law practice was limited to appointed cases in family court and post-conviction relief actions. In my six years of private practice with the Bryan Law Firm, I appeared in Circuit Court on a monthly basis.
18. What percentage of your practice involved civil, criminal, domestic, and other matters during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench?
- (a) civil: None in the five years prior to my appointment as magistrate, other than an occasional appointed post-conviction relief case. In my practice with the Bryan Law Firm, 70% of my practice was in civil court.
 - (b) criminal: None in the five years prior to my appointment as magistrate. In my practice with the Bryan Law Firm, 25% of my practice was in criminal court as Prosecutor for the Sumter County Sheriff's Department.
 - (c) domestic: None in the five years prior to my appointment as magistrate, other than approximately three cases per year in which I was appointed to represent parties in DSS abuse and neglect actions. In my private practice with the Bryan Law Firm, approximately 5% of my practice was representing parties in appointed cases in Family Court (where both myself or other members of my firm were appointed).
 - (d) other: None.
19. What percentage of your practice in trial court during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench involved matters that went to a jury, including those that settled prior to trial?
- (a) jury: In the five years prior to my becoming Chief Magistrate, I was employed by Synovus Trust Company as a Trust Officer. My law practice was limited to appointed cases in family court and post-conviction relief actions. In my six years of private practice with the Bryan Law Firm, approximately 10% of my practice involved cases that went to a jury trial.
 - (b) non-jury: In the five years prior to my becoming Chief Magistrate, I was employed by Synovus Trust Company as a Trust Officer. My law practice was limited to appointed cases in family court and post-conviction relief actions. In my six years of private practice with the Bryan Law Firm, approximately 90% of my practice involved nonjury cases or cases that settled prior to trial.

Did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel in these matters?

While practicing at the Bryan Law Firm, I primarily served as sole counsel for any cases involving Circuit Court or Magistrate Court litigation. In my appellate practice, I worked with the trial attorney but performed the bulk of any legal research and brief writing and handled all oral arguments before the appellate courts.

20. List five of the most significant litigated matters you have personally handled in either trial or appellate court or before a state or federal agency. Give citations if the cases were reported and describe why these matters were significant.

(a) Goldman v. RBC, Inc., 369 S.C. 462, 632 S.E.2d 850 (2006)

I represented David and Emilie Goldman in this quiet title action regarding the portion of an abandoned railroad track that bordered their property. The Supreme Court upheld the Court of Appeals' and Circuit Court's rulings that railroad easements obtained by the railroad pursuant to a statutory presumption of grant revert to the adjoining landowners once the land is no longer used for railroad purposes. This decision is significant for all landowners whose property borders a railroad right of way. It was a significant case in my career because it was removed by the Defendant to US District Court, remanded by the District Court back to state court, appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, and again remanded back to state court. The Circuit Court ruled in our favor, and the case was appealed to both the South Carolina Court of Appeals and the South Carolina Supreme Court. In all five courts, I was able to get a favorable ruling for my client.

(b) McMaster v. South Carolina Retirement Sys., 362 S.C. 362, 608 S.E.2d 843 (2005).

I represented Tom Lewis and Johnny Martin in this appeal to the South Carolina Supreme Court. Both Lewis and Martin were convicted of criminal conspiracy, misconduct in office, and receiving stolen goods stemming from the embezzlement of funds from Sumter County School District 17. They were ordered to pay restitution of \$45,000 and \$50,000, respectively, as part of their criminal sentence. After their conviction and sentencing, the legislature enacted South Carolina Code section 8-1-115 creating a lien on the public retirement or pension of any public employee convicted of misappropriation of public funds. The Attorney General's office then brought proceedings against Lewis and Martin seeking a lien against their retirement for an amount greater than the restitution amount ordered by the court in their criminal sentences. The trial court ruled in our favor that the lien was limited to the amount of restitution ordered by the sentencing judge and any subsequent proceeding to increase the restitution award violated the Double Jeopardy clause and was an impermissible ex post facto law. The Supreme Court reversed. While we were ultimately unsuccessful, this was a significant case in clarifying whether the State could relitigate the amount of restitution after the date of the Defendant's conviction.

(c) Covington v. George, 359 S.C. 100, 597 S.E.2d 142 (2004).

My law partner John Ford represented the Plaintiff in an automobile accident case tried before a jury in the Circuit Court, and I handled the subsequent appeal of the case to the South Carolina Supreme Court. In Covington, the trial court held that the Defendant in an automobile accident case could not dispute the reasonableness of the Plaintiff's medical expenses by introducing evidence that the treating hospital accepted less than full payment for its services. The Defendant appealed to the South Carolina Court of Appeals and the case was transferred from the Court of Appeals directly to the South Carolina Supreme Court pursuant to Rule 204(b) of the South Carolina Appellate Court Rules. Under this rule, the Supreme Court may, in its discretion, certify a case for review by the Supreme Court before it has been determined by the Court of Appeals.

(“Certification is normally appropriate where the case involves an issue of significant public interest or a legal principle of major importance.” Rule 204(b), SCACR). The Supreme Court upheld the lower court’s decision, finding that the collateral source rule prohibited the Defendant from presenting evidence that Plaintiff’s medical provider accepted reduced payments. This case was significant for its implications in all personal injury cases, and was featured in the May 31, 2004, issue of South Carolina Lawyers Weekly.

(d) Burgess v. Nationwide Mut. Ins. Co., 361 S.C. 196, 603 S.E.2d 861 (Ct. App. 2004).

Robert Burgess was injured in a motorcycle accident. The motorcycle had liability insurance only, but Burgess also had three other vehicles that were covered under a separate policy with both liability and underinsured motorist coverage (UIM). The Insurer denied basic UIM coverage on the motor vehicle accident because the vehicle involved in the collision was not specifically covered under the policy. Burgess brought a Declaratory Judgment action in Circuit Court, and the court held that Burgess was entitled to \$15,000 basic UIM coverage. Defendant appealed to the South Carolina Court of Appeals, and I represented Burgess in the appeal. The Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court’s decision. This case is significant because the Court of appeals clarified that UIM coverage is “personal and portable” in South Carolina and is available up to the statutory minimum amount of coverage when an Insured elects to carry that coverage, even when the vehicle involved in the accident is not covered under the policy.

(e) Glasscock, Inc. v. United States Fidelity & Guar. Co., 348 S.C. 76, 557 S.E.2d 689 (Ct. App. 2001).

In this case, the South Carolina Court of appeals held that “loss of use” damages were recoverable under Glasscock’s underinsured motorist coverage (UIM) even though the policy did not expressly cover loss of use in the UIM section. The Insurer covered “loss of use” damages in the property damage portion of the policy and was therefore required to offer the same coverage under its UIM policy. This case was featured in the December 10, 2001 issue of South Carolina Lawyers Weekly. This case was significant in my career because the trial attorney initially obtained an unfavorable ruling in the Circuit Court and then hired me to file a motion for reconsideration. I successfully argued the motion before the Circuit Court, and the judge reversed his decision and ordered that the UIM policy be reformed to cover loss of use damages. The Defendant appealed to the South Carolina Court of Appeals, and I handled the appeal on behalf of the Plaintiff. The Court of Appeals ruled in our favor, affirming the decision of the trial court.

21. List up to five civil appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision, and the citation if the case was reported.

(a) Goldman v. RBC, Inc., 369 S.C. 462, 632 S.E.2d 850 (2006)

(b) Burgess v. Nationwide Mut. Ins. Co., 361 S.C. 196, 603 S.E.2d 861 (Ct. App. 2004).

(c) Covington v. George, 359 S.C. 100, 597 S.E.2d 142 (2004).

(d) Glasscock, Inc. v. United States Fidelity & Guar. Co., 348 S.C. 76, 557 S.E.2d 689 (Ct. App. 2001).

(e) McMaster v. South Carolina Retirement Sys., 362 S.C. 362, 608 S.E.2d 843 (2005).

22. List up to five criminal appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision and the citation if the case was reported.

None.

23. Have you ever held judicial office? If so, list the periods of your service, the courts involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Describe the jurisdiction of each of the courts and note any limitations on the jurisdiction of each court.
- Yes. I was appointed Magistrate for Sumter County in April of 2011. I was appointed Chief Magistrate by the Chief Justice of the S.C. Supreme Court in July of 2011, and have served in that capacity continuously since that date. I was recently reappointed Chief Magistrate in June of 2017. Magistrate's court has jurisdiction over traffic and criminal cases punishable by a fine up to \$500 (before assessments) or up to thirty days in jail. We also have jurisdiction over civil cases with an amount in controversy up to \$7,500.00. We have concurrent jurisdiction with Circuit Court for residential and commercial evictions. We also have jurisdiction over actions for restraining orders. Magistrate court judges are also responsible for signing the vast majority of search warrants and arrest warrants within the County, conducting bond hearings, and conducting preliminary hearings. Magistrate's Court has no jurisdiction to hear cases involving any interest in real property.
24. If the answer to question 23 is yes, describe or list five of your most significant orders or opinions and give the citations if they were reported. Also list citations to any appellate review of these orders or opinions.
- (a) South Carolina Law Enforcement Division v. Palmetto Internet Center & Janice Ryles, 2012CV4310103773. (Order) This case was appealed to the Circuit Court in Case no. 2012CP4302121, but the appeal was subsequently withdrawn.
 - (b) South Carolina Law Enforcement Division v. 38 Sweepstakes Monitors, Computer Towers, 2012CV4310103811. (Order) This case was appealed to the Circuit Court as 2013CP4300319. The appeal was denied.
 - (c) Aycock v. BB&T, 2016CV4310106460. (Order)
 - (d) Pollard v. Wilson, 2015CV4310105031. (Order) This case was appealed to the Circuit Court as 2015CP4300199. The appeal was denied.
 - (e) State v. Marilyn Albert, Ticket 68321ES, (Order granting motion to dismiss in a DUI case.)
25. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, list the periods of your service, the office or offices involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Also, state whether or not you have timely filed your report with the State Ethics Commission during the period you held public office. If not, were you ever subject to a penalty? If so, give details, including dates.
- No, but I was appointed to serve on the Sumter County Zoning Board of Appeals from 2009 until I resigned to serve as a Magistrate in 2011.
26. List all employment you had while serving as a judge (whether full-time or part-time, contractual or at will, consulting or otherwise) other than elected judicial office. Specify your dates of employment, employer, major job responsibilities, and supervisor.
- None.
27. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

No.

28. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law, teaching of law, or holding judicial or other public office? If so, give details, including a description of your occupation, business, or profession, the dates of your employment, and the name of your business or employer.

Yes. I was employed as a Trust Officer with Synovus Trust Company from 2005 until February of 2011. I was responsible for the administration of trust accounts, custodial accounts, and probate estates where Synovus Trust Company was named as the Trustee, Custodian, and/or Personal Representative.

29. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise? Explain the nature of the business, your duties, and the term of your service.

No.

30. Please explain why you think you meet the professional and academic ability criteria for the seat you seek.

I believe that my educational record and diverse professional experience make me well equipped to be a Circuit Court judge. In law school, I excelled at legal writing and research. I was selected as an Articles Editor for the American Bar Association's Real Property, Probate and Trust Journal, and I was a legal writing instructor for Professor Eldon Wedlock's Legal Writing class. I also received American Jurisprudence Awards for the highest grades in the class for Legal Research and Writing I and II.

My first job after graduating from law school was Staff Attorney with the South Carolina Court of Appeals, under the supervision of the Chief Staff Attorney John Nichols. Mr. Nichols had an infectious energy and enthusiasm for legal research and catalogued every new opinion from the South Carolina appellate courts as they were published. He is still one of the most knowledgeable attorneys I have ever met with regard to South Carolina case law. Mr. Nichols instilled in me the importance of doing exhaustive legal research on every case before turning the finished product over to the assigned judge. I later worked as a law clerk to the Honorable Kaye Hearn. In my two years with Judge Hearn I wrote many draft opinions. Judge Hearn has a tremendous work ethic and a succinct and exact style of legal writing. She instilled in all of her law clerks the importance of editing the opinions multiple times until they were clear, concise and absolutely accurate in every respect.

After leaving the academic environment of the South Carolina Court of Appeals, I switched gears entirely and went into private practice with Bryan, Bahnmuller, Goldman & McElveen law firm in Sumter, South Carolina. In this ten-member law firm, which was primarily a Plaintiff's practice, the attorneys practiced in the areas of workers' compensation, family law, social security disability, personal injury, medical malpractice, residential real estate, and general business litigation. I was eager to get trial court experience, and was hired primarily to work with the two attorneys in the business and real estate section to handle any litigation in that area. My practice soon expanded to working on appeals for other members of the firm in medical malpractice, workers' compensation, and family law. I also began working on appeals for other attorneys in the

community. Like any new attorney in a small firm, I was given a broad array of cases and responsibilities. One of the best aspects about working in a smaller firm is that I was immediately given a great deal of autonomy to develop my own cases and to appear as lead counsel on behalf of my clients. Within a very short period of time I was able to conduct cases on my own and to appear in Circuit Court in both bench trials and jury trials. Our firm became Counsel for Sumter County during this time and I began to work with the Sumter County administration on employment issues, to advise the Sumter County Treasurer's Office on tax sales, and to prosecute the cases for the Sumter County Sheriff's Department in Magistrate's Court. As the County prosecutor, I was able to gain a tremendous amount of jury trial experience, prosecuting Defendants for such offenses as driving under the influence and domestic violence. My six years with the Bryan Law Firm gave me experience in a wide array of civil cases and valuable courtroom experience.

In 2004, I joined Synovus Trust Company (formerly the NBSC Trust Department) as a Trust Officer. During that time, I attended Cannon Financial Institute's well respected "Trust School" and learned the intricate world of trusts and estates. I excelled at the academic portion of this area of the law, earning a 95 and a 98, respectively on the Trust I and Trust II exams. As Trust Officer, I managed accounts where Synovus Trust Company had been named Trustee, Custodian, or Personal Representative. I personally oversaw two charitable accounts that awarded scholarships annually, a student loan account that offered low interest loans to local students, and numerous custodial and investment accounts for high net worth clients. In addition, I managed trust accounts for numerous trust beneficiaries, making sure that the terms of the trust were carried out exactly. This portion of the job required me to work with many individuals who needed assistance managing their finances. I also had supervision over a staff of four employees in the Trust Department.

In February of 2011, I was appointed as Magistrate for Sumter County. In July of 2011, I was appointed Chief Magistrate by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I have served as Chief Magistrate from that date to the present. In Magistrate's Court, I hear a large volume of cases in both the civil and criminal/traffic realms. I conduct bench trials and jury trials, preliminary hearings and bond hearings. As Chief Magistrate, I am also responsible for the court finances, reporting, and administration. I set the schedules for court each week for our six judges, conduct most of the jury selections, and oversee a staff of twelve employees. When I became Chief Magistrate in Sumter, our backlog of criminal and traffic jury trial cases was three to four years long. To reduce this backlog, I instituted regular pre-trial status conferences between the defendants and prosecuting agencies, and increased the terms of court for jury trials. As a result, the vast majority of our cases are now tried in six months to a year.

Magistrate's Court is "ground zero" of the judicial system in South Carolina and for many litigants it is the only courtroom they will ever enter. Magistrates hear a high volume of cases, and a large percentage of the litigants are pro se and may know very little about the legal system. For this reason, I believe it is essential that the court be conducted with professionalism and competence. Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned in my time as a Magistrate is to have an abundance of patience. As a judge, I do not have the luxury of showing frustration, boredom, irritation, or anger. Each litigant deserves my complete attention and to be treated in a fair and competent manner. While this can be challenging at times with pro se litigants, I believe it is vital to the integrity of our judicial system.

I believe my academic experience in law school, and at the South Carolina Court of Appeals, combined with my courtroom experience at the Bryan Law Firm and Magistrate's Court, give me the professional and educational expertise to be a Circuit Court judge.

31. Provide, **as a separate attachment**, a complete, current financial net worth statement that itemizes in detail:
- (a) the identity and value of all financial assets held, directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, bank accounts, real estate, securities, trusts, investments, and other financial holdings; and
 - (b) the identity and amount of each liability owed, directly or indirectly, which is in excess of \$1,000, including, but not limited to, debts, mortgages, loans, and other financial obligations.

(A net worth statement is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement.)

A complete, current financial net worth statement was provided to the Commission.

NOTE: The Commission may require written confirmation that financial obligations have been satisfied or that the parties have agreed upon a payment schedule.

32. Describe any financial arrangements or business relationships you have, or have had in the past, that could constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position you seek or currently hold. Explain how you would resolve any potential conflict of interest.

In the past 6 years that I have served as a Magistrate, I have recused myself as required by the Canons of Judicial Ethics in cases involving former clients. My husband is a practicing attorney with the law firm of Curtis & Croft, LLC, but he practices primarily in the areas of residential and commercial real estate and has only appeared in Magistrate's Court twice over the past six years. If elected to the Circuit Court bench, I would continue to recuse myself in any case involving my husband's law firm, my previous employment with Synovus Trust Company, or any former client.

33. Have you ever been arrested, charged, or held by federal, state, or other law enforcement authorities for violation or for suspicion of violation of any federal law or regulation, state law or regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance, or any other law, including another country's law? If so, give details but do not include traffic violations which are subject to a penalty of \$125 or less. You must include any and all arrests, including, but not limited to, offenses for driving under the influence or similar traffic offenses. Include all arrests that resulted in expungement, which will be redacted. If you have questions regarding whether to include an offense, please contact the Commission.

[All answers have been received and considered by the Commission, and as noted above, any expunged matters are redacted from the record.]

34. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? If yes, explain.

[All answers have been received and considered by the Commission, and as noted above, any expunged matters are redacted from the record.]

35. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? If so, give details.

No.

36. Have you ever been sued by a client? Have you ever been a named party (personally or professionally) in or had a pecuniary interest in any civil or criminal proceedings? If so, give details, including, but not limited to, dates, and resolutions.

I have never been sued by a client. I was named as a Co-Defendant in an action for civil forfeiture filed in the Sumter County Court of Common Pleas, Case number 2002CP4301043. This stemmed from my husband's arrest on drug charges in June of 2002. I was joint owner of the vehicle that was seized by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office at the time of my husband's arrest. The case was settled out of court.

I was also the Defendant Creditor in a real estate foreclosure action filed by Trustmark National Bank against Thomas Andrew White. Case no. 2009CP4303018. I was named as a Defendant due to the fact that I held a second Mortgage on White's property securing a personal debt in the amount of \$2,500. The home was ultimately sold at judicial sale, without any surplus to be applied to any creditors other than the Plaintiff Trustmark National Bank.

37. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been sanctioned or disciplined for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct or has any jurisdiction found that you committed any misconduct? If so, give the details and describe any final disposition. Include any and all confidential and public sanction, discipline, or finding of misconduct of any kind.

[Yes and no responses are redacted for all candidates unless there is a public discipline.]

38. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? If so, give the details and the resolution. Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect? If so, give the details.

No.

39. If you are in private practice, are you covered by malpractice insurance and, if so, how long have you carried malpractice insurance? If applicable, have you ever been covered by a tail policy? If so, please explain when you were covered by a tail policy. Also, if applicable, indicate your coverage and deductible for your current malpractice policy.

I am no longer covered under any malpractice insurance policy. Upon leaving the Bryan Law Firm to join Synovus Trust Company, I carried a tail policy of malpractice insurance for approximately two years.

40. Are you active on or a member of a social media or Internet site or have you, to your knowledge, been featured or depicted on a social media or Internet site, such as,

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.? If so, how would your use of social media or other similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity?

I am a member of Facebook and Instagram. I do not comment on or reference my position as Magistrate in any way. I do not comment on my work or any of my cases, or even my place or type of employment. I do not comment on any political issues, or on any controversial social issues.

41. Are you now or have you ever been employed as a “lobbyist,” as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(13), or have you acted in the capacity of a “lobbyist’s principal,” as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(14)? If so, give the dates of your employment or activity in such capacity and specify by whom you were directed or employed.
No.
42. Since filing with the Commission your letter of intent to run for judicial office, have you accepted lodging, transportation, entertainment, food, meals, beverages, money, or any other thing of value as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(1) from a lobbyist or lobbyist’s principal? If so, please specify the item or items you received, the date of receipt, and the lobbyist or lobbyist’s principal involved.
No.
43. Itemize (by amount, type, and date) all expenditures, other than those for travel and room and board, made by you, or on your behalf in furtherance of your candidacy for the position you seek. If you have spent over \$100, have you reported your expenditures to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?
\$1.50, postage to mail letters to the Judicial Merit Selection Commission and to the Commission on Lawyer/Judicial Conduct, July 2017.
44. List the recipient and amount of all contributions made by you, a member of your immediate family, or by a business with whom you are associated, to members of the General Assembly within the past four years.
None.
45. Have you directly or indirectly requested the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to your election for the position for which you are being screened or have you been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening? Have you received the assurance of any public official or public employee that they will seek the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to your election for the position for which you are being screened? If so, give details.
No.

Note: The flash drive with your application materials contains (1) Section 2-19-70(c); (2) JMSC Rule 24, and (3) informal opinions and letters concerning pledging prohibitions, with which third parties acting on your behalf, as well as you, must comply.

46. Have you requested any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released? Describe the campaigning you have done for this election and include a list of those individuals you have asked to campaign on your behalf and, to the best of your knowledge, those who have campaigned for you on their own initiative.
No.
47. Are you familiar with the 48-hour rule, which prohibits a candidate from seeking pledges until after the draft report becomes final, which occurs on the day and time specified on the Commission's published screening schedule?
Yes.
48. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? If so, please specify the amount, solicitor, donor, and date of the solicitation.
No.
49. Since submitting your letter of intent to become a candidate, have you or has anyone acting on your behalf contacted any member of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission about your candidacy or intention to become a candidate? If so, give details.
No.
50. List all bar associations and professional organizations of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices you have held in such groups.
- (a) Member, South Carolina Bar, 1995 to present
 - (b) Third Circuit Delegate to the S.C. Bar House of Delegates, 2000 to 2001
 - (c) Member, Sumter County Bar, 1998 to present
 - (d) Sumter County Bar Executive Committee, 2003 to 2004
 - (e) Member, South Carolina Summary Court Judges Association, 2011 to present
 - (f) Member, South Carolina Summary Court Judges Advisory Board, 2015 to present
51. List all civic, charitable, educational, social, and fraternal organizations of which you are or have been a member during the past five years and include any offices held in such a group, any professional honors, awards, or other forms of recognition received and not listed elsewhere.
- (a) Sumter Rotary Club, 2004 to present. Avenue of Service Award Recipient, 2014-2015, Program Chair 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, Newsletter editor, 2006-2008, Membership Committee Chair 2005.
 - (b) Sumter YMCA. Member, Board of Directors, 2011 to 2016. President of the Board, 2015. Vice President, 2014.
 - (c) Member, Alice Drive Baptist Church, 2001 to present. Served on the Building Committee, Personnel Committee, Sunday School teacher for children and youth.
 - (d) Appointed to the Sumter County Zoning Board of Appeals, 2009 to 2011
52. Provide any other information that may reflect positively or negatively on your candidacy, or which you believe should be disclosed in connection with consideration of you for

nomination for the position you seek. This information may include how your life experiences have affected or influenced the kind or type of judge you have been or plan to be.

In 2002, at a time when I considered myself to be thriving in the private practice of law, my husband was arrested on drug charges. When officers came to my house to inform me of his arrest, I learned for the first time that he had developed a cocaine habit that was well on its way to becoming an addiction. At the time of his arrest, my husband had just left the private practice of law and had been appointed a Magistrate for Sumter County. His arrest was highly publicized in the community. He ultimately pled guilty to two counts of possession of cocaine and received two years of probation. He was suspended from the practice of law for two years. Through his arrest and subsequent recovery from addiction, I learned firsthand what many people already know – drug and alcohol addiction can happen to anyone.

At the time this was happening to us I would not have been able to point to one single thing that I thought was a positive aspect of this experience. Time and hindsight have remarkably proven me wrong. There is a certain resilience that can only be earned by going through a hardship of your own making. Fortunately, Warren immediately took responsibility for his actions and began doing the hard work that recovery requires. I am grateful today for his recovery and proud to say that he is thriving in the practice of law. Warren was appointed several years ago to serve on the Sumter City/County Zoning Board of Appeals. He was elected Chairman by his fellow Board members two years ago. Warren was also appointed to serve on the Real Estate Practices Council of the South Carolina Bar. In addition, Warren and his law partner serve as Counsel for the Sumter County Board of Realtors. We are grateful for the grace and support that he has received from the Sumter community.

This experience has without a doubt influenced the type of judge I have been and will continue to be. As a Magistrate, I see many people, teenagers and adults, who are at the beginning stages of alcoholism and drug abuse. Their substance abuse issues have caused them to get arrested for the first time. In many instances, the court is able to intervene in a Defendant's life to confront him about the role that substance abuse has played in his legal problems. If the Defendant doesn't address his addiction issues, he will many times continue in a downward spiral. I make every effort to get first-time offenders to participate in diversion programs such as Pre-Trial Intervention, Conditional Discharge, and the Alcohol Education Program. As a judge, I am able to leverage the potentially negative consequences of the arrest to convince a Defendant of the need to seek treatment. While I do not directly reference my husband's personal experiences, I do like to encourage the Defendant that recovery is possible and there is always hope.

53. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five (5) persons from whom you are providing references. Also, provide the Commission with **original letters** of recommendation from each person listed herein, including their signature (preferably in blue ink). **The Commission will not accept a photocopy or electronic submission of a letter of recommendation and failure to include all five (5) original letters of recommendation in your packet when you submit it will render your packet**

incomplete. Please **do not** have references mail your reference letters to the Commission directly. *You must return the five (5) original letters of recommendation to the Commission with your application packet.*

- (a) Mr. John Hoffman, CEO, Sumter YMCA, 50 Willow Drive, Sumter, SC 29150, 803-773-1404
- (b) Dr. Clay Smith, Pastor, Alice Drive Baptist Church, 1305 Loring Mill Road, Sumter, SC 29150, 803-905-5200
- (c) Jack Osteen, The Item newspaper, 36 W. Liberty Street, Sumter, SC, 803-774-1200
- (d) David Goldman, Esquire, 1555 Salterstown Road, Sumter, SC 29153, 803-495-2774
- (e) Larry C. Weston, Esquire, 201 N. Main Street, Sumter, SC 29150, 803-778-2421

54. Describe any interest you or a member of your immediate family has in real property:

- (a) in which there is a potential conflict of interest with your involvement in a South Carolina state or local public agency;

None

- (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200; or

1145 Boardwalk, Sumter, SC 29150, primary residence owned by Warren and Kristi Curtis as joint tenants with right of survivorship, value of \$362,777

- (a) Nature of any potential conflict of interest. None.
- (b) Nature and value of any public improvements. City water, sewer, and paving.
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. None.

1722 Charles Dr., Manning, SC 29102, campground, owned by Warren Curtis, Charles Curtis, Gordon Curtis and Carol Curtis as tenants in common, value \$188,300, and South Carolina Public Service Authority Leasehold Interest, assigned to Warren Curtis, Charles Curtis, Gordon Curtis and Carol Curtis upon the death of the original leaseholders Charles H. Curtis, Jr. and Marguerite Curtis. This 99-year commercial lease was executed in 1969.

- (a) Nature of any potential conflict of interest. None.
- (b) Nature and value of any public improvements. None.
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. None. Please note that a portion of this property is leased from the South Carolina Public Service Authority.

325 West Calhoun St., Sumter SC 29150, office building, owned by C&C Properties of Sumter, LLC, Members of the LLC are Warren Curtis and William Croft, value of \$732,213.

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest; None.
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; City water, sewer, and paving.
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. None.

329 West Calhoun St., Sumter, SC 29150, residence, owned by Warren Curtis and Charles H. Curtis, III, Trustees of the Carol Gay Curtis Trust U/W Marguerite M. Curtis, value \$80,296.

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest; None.
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; City water, sewer, and paving.
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. None.

(c) which was sold, leased, or rented to a state or local public agency in South Carolina. None. Please note that a portion of the property described above as 1722 Charles Drive, Manning, South Carolina is leased from the South Carolina Public Service Authority pursuant to a 99-year lease executed in 1969.

List the interest you hold and the value and location of the property. Identify as applicable the:

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest;
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; and
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property.

Attach a copy of any contract or agreement.

Not applicable.

55. Identify any personal property interest you or a member of your immediate family sold, leased, or rented to a South Carolina state or local public agency. Identify the property, its amount or value, and the name of the agency. Attach a copy of any contract or agreement. None.

56. For sitting judges, if you currently hold an interest in stock or other securities or have held such an interest, list each stock you currently own or owned during the prior calendar year. If you prefer, you may attach broker or account records containing the requested information instead of listing it here.

Synovus Financial Corp.
Total Systems Services, Inc.

57. For sitting judges, have you ever accepted anything of value from an attorney or litigant in a matter currently or previously before you or your court? If so, please give the details, including the name of the attorney or litigant and the thing of value you received. None.

58. For sitting judges, have you used the services of your staff, for which you did not pay, while campaigning for this office? No.

YOUR SIGNATURE WILL BE HELD TO CONSTITUTE A WAIVER OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANY PROCEEDING BEFORE A GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE OR ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR CREDIT.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT MY ANSWERS ARE TRUE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Signature: _____

Sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 2017.

(Notary Signature)

(Notary Printed Name)
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: _____